

# 2004 Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

## Customer Focus

Thanks to the USDA's Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, the 197-acre Borders property in Foster, Rhode Island, will forever be actively farmed. Development rights to the property have been acquired by the Rhode Island Agricultural Land Preservation Commission, with the support of the Department of Environmental Management, the Champlin Foundations and The Nature Conservancy.

Charles M. Borders and his late wife Margery have lived on and worked their North Road dairy farm since he was born almost 80 years ago. They had always hoped that the farm could be preserved for future generations to enjoy. To realize that goal, Mr. Borders donated his farm to a nonprofit organization; Borders Farm Preservation, Inc. Proceeds from the sale of the development rights to the farm will provide an endowment to maintain the land as farmland.

Located near the Scituate Reservoir, the Borders property is a historic farm. The farm supports a herd of beef cows and contains many acres of pasture and hay lands. "The purchase of the development rights for this parcel will help to ensure the continued protection of Rhode Island's agricultural and natural landscapes for present and future generations to come," said Judith M. Doerner, state conservationist from USDA - NRCS.

## Rhode Island Summary



### Overview

The USDA Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) help farmers keep their productive land in agriculture. The FRPP provides financial assistance for State, Tribal, and local governments and non-profit organizations to purchase conservation easements (or development rights) on farmland. The landowner gets much-needed dollars and the land is protected from development. Under the FRPP, NRCS provides up to 50% of the price paid by the cooperating entity for the conservation easement and the entity holds, manages, and enforces the easement. The FRPP was established in 1996, attracting applications for funding from numerous entities in Rhode Island and throughout the nation.

### Accomplishments

In Fiscal Year 2004 Congress appropriated \$75 million nationwide for FRPP. In Rhode Island the NRCS staff reached out to as many potential applicants as possible to alert them to the availability of these funds. Farmland is being protected from urbanization in Rhode Island by a diverse group of entities, ranging from the State of Rhode Island's long established Agricultural Land Preservation Commission to several relatively new non-profit land trusts. NRCS received applications from seven entities seeking funds from the 2004 FRPP to assist them with the protection of twelve farms. The farms represent a cross section of Rhode Island agriculture and the dreams of the land's owners to preserve both productive farmland and part of Rhode Island's rural heritage. The farms ranged in size from 18 acres to 180 acres. The landowners range from retired persons seeking to preserve the heritage of their land to young start-up farmers needing a break to get started. Many types of farms were represented – fruit, vegetables, hay, livestock, and sod. Rhode Island received \$1,251,672 in FY 2004 funds to distribute among the applicants. The applicants were ranked according to an established scoring system and by mid September FRPP funds were allocated to three applicants. The three applicants will continue their negotiations with the five farms selected for funding.

### Outlook

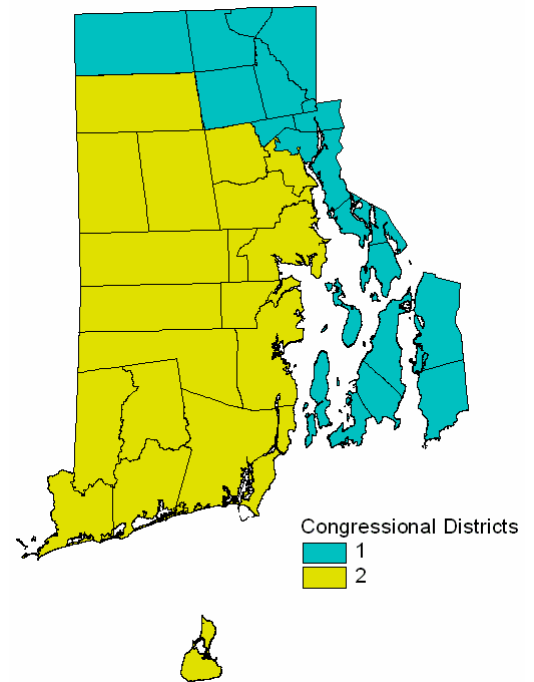
Interest in protecting farmland from urbanization remains very strong in Rhode Island. Public support for funding farmland protection and other open space initiatives has been unwavering for the past twenty years. Past efforts by State, local government and private organizations have yielded many heartening successes, but the job is far from over. As farmland owners age and family situations evolve, the need to receive cash value for farmland matures. It is anticipated that the Rhode Island Agricultural Land Preservation Commission, local governments, and land trusts will continue to actively preserve farmland over the next decade. To date, the number of willing sellers has outpaced the available funds to protect farmlands.



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## Rhode Island's FRPP Dollars and Contracts by Congressional District



## Rhode Island's Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program Activities

Fiscal Year 2004			Cumulative Total (1996 – 2004)	
Congressional Districts	FRPP Dollars	Number of Farms to be preserved	FRPP Dollars	Number of farms projected to be preserved
District 1	851,672	3	1,686,672	9
District 2	400,000	2	2,574,300	14
<b>State Totals</b>	<b>1,251,672</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4,260,972</b>	<b>23</b>

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